

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

Memorandum

DATE: July 22, 2004

REPLY TO: KEC-4
ATTN OF:

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-161)

TO: Ron Morinaka (KEWU - 4)
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager, COTR

Proposed Action: Grave Creek Channel Stabilization Project – phase II

Project No: 199500400- Phase II

Watershed Management Program (See App. A : Available Management Techniques): 1.6 Install Large Woody Debris Structures; 1.7 Install Other Habitat Complexity Structures; 1.9 Structural Bank Protection using Bioengineering Methods; 1.16 Spawning Habitat Enhancements; 1.17 Rearing Habitat Enhancements; 2.1 Maintain Healthy Riparian Plant Communities.

Location: On Grave Creek, located about 12 miles southeast of the town of Eureka, Montana, within T. 38 North, R. 25 West, Sect. 12, 13, 14, in Lincoln County

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP)



Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund MFWP to accomplish Phase II of channel stabilization along Graves Creek. The current proposal is very much the same as for Phase I (as per our Oct. 15, 2002 Memo.): stabilize about 4,800 feet of the creek by realigning and shaping the channel; install log and rock vanes, and root wads; install debris jams and cobble patches, and planting native vegetation along the riparian corridor to stabilize the banks. The Phase II work is immediately adjacent and downstream from that the Phase I work that was accomplished in 2002.

The purpose of the project is to stabilize that channel, provide for floodplain function, improve rearing and adult holding habitat for westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout by:

- a. Reducing sediment sources and bank erosion,
- b. Convert the channelized segments into a self maintaining channel type,
- c. Use natural stream stabilization techniques to allow the stream to adjust slowly over time,
- d. Improve the migratory corridor for westslope cutthroat and bull trout species with emphasis on using native materials, and
- e. Restore degraded channels and oxbows to improve juvenile rearing trout habitat.

The equipment that is planned to be used, along with the planned time of year for construction is the same as outlined in our Oct. 15, 2002 memo for Phase I. The relevance and importance for restoring Grave Creek for the fish species in question, is also provided in that memorandum.

Analysis: The compliance checklist for this project was completed on April 22, 2004 by Jim Dunnigan of the MFWP and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

This project is the second restoration effort on lower Grave Creek and is intended to compliment present and future restoration in this drainage. Short-term impacts of the project largely relate to ground disturbing activities from channel work, bank sloping, vegetation establishment, and associated work. Long-term benefits are expected to improve fish and wildlife habitat and populations, aesthetics, water quality, greater channel stability, reduction of sediment loading, a healthier habitat for aquatic life, and create more diverse habitat for riparian-dependent wildlife.

The one listed ESA species that could be present in the project area is the Federally-threatened bull trout (pers. com., Rox Rogers, USFWS, Aug. 6, 2002 and April 24, 2004). The USFWS has issued a section 6 (c)(1) bull trout Biological Opinion that authorizes take for purposes of recover throughout the range of this species, including actions such as habitat restoration. Such take of bull trout is exempted under the existing cooperative agreement between MFWP and USFWS under Section 6 of the ESA. Individual projects that are planned by MFWP and that fall under the USFWS's recovery program are permitted annually under Section 6. A copy of the Biological Opinion is in the project file.

Mr. Galen R. Burgett, archaeologist with the USFWS, conducted a pedestrian cultural resource inventory at the project on August 13-16, 2002 and a total of about 180 acres were examined. The survey covered the Phase I component of the project (about 4,300 linear feet of Graves Creek) as well as the future anticipated Phase II (about 4,800 linear feet of Graves Creek). Accordingly, Mr. Burgett determined that:

1. There were no potentially eligible cultural properties in the area of potential effect,
2. The geomorphic environment of the creek has extremely low probability that buried properties are present,
3. Most of the earth moving to restore the channel as proposed, would be in the active channel, and
4. The proposed project activities would create a low impact on stream banks with minimal disturbance of sediment.

In their undated letter (envelope postmarked Oct. 9, 2002), the State Archaeologist/Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer responded with acceptance of the CR Report without mitigative measures or conditions. This resultant outcome also covers the activities currently proposed, and there is no need to replicated efforts. A copy of the survey and SHPO response are located in the project file at BPA's Environmental Policy and Strategic Planning group.

Standard in-channel water quality protection procedures will be followed during the implementation of the project. Applications for the following have been filed with the respective agencies: a section 404 application under the Clean Water Act permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a 310 permit from the Lincoln County Conservation District; a flood plain development permit from the Lincoln County Planning Department, a 318 Department of Environmental Quality permit, and a Department of Natural Resources Land Use License. All permits will be acquired prior to initiating ground-disturbing work on this project.

The proposed project will largely be constructed on private property, and project planning has included consultation and dialogue with a variety of stakeholders including: the USFWS, Kootenai River Network, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, National Fish and Wildlife Federation, the Steele-Reese Foundation, the Montana Community Foundation, the Montana Trout Foundation, the Cadeau Foundations, Lincoln County Conservation District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, U.S. Forest Service, State Historic Preservation Office, and Natural Resources Conservation Service. The MFWP has solicited public input to the project via public meetings with local residents, and has advertised for public comment through the local media and MFWP website.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, as well as BPA's Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265) and ROD. This Supplement Analysis finds that: 1) implementing the proposed action will not result in any substantial changes to the Watershed Management Program that are relevant to environmental concerns; and 2) there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Watershed Management Program or its impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required and no special terms and conditions are warranted for the project

Carl J. Keller
Fish and Wildlife Biologist – KEC-4

CONCUR:

DATE: _____

Thomas C. McKinney
Nepa Compliance Officer – KEC-4

Attachments:
SHPO letter of acceptance postmarked October 9, 2002

cc: (w/ attachments)
Mr. Jim Dunnigan, MT Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 475 Fish Hatchery Road, Libby MT 59923
Ms. Rox Roger, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Montana Partners Program, 780 Creston Hatchery Road, Kalispell, MT 59901